



CROSSROADS

MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY | FALL 2018

NATURAL EYE

Photographer **Noppadol Paothong, '01**
receives international recognition

'THE EXPERIMENTAL SELF'

Rare **Edvard Munch** exhibit
comes to MSSU

GIANT LEAPS FOR MANKIND

NASA's **Dr. Janet Kavandi, '80,**
talks next generation of space travel



For the first time in 20 years, the City of Joplin's annual Fourth of July Celebration was held at Fred Hughes Stadium. Thousands of people packed the stands to enjoy live music and activities before a spectacular fireworks show. Plans are already underway for the 2019 event.

FROM THE EDITOR

“Perspective” is defined as a particular way of viewing things that depends on one’s experience and personality.

You might be surprised to find this latest issue of Crossroads magazine in your mailbox. We recently made the decision that adding a third edition each year will only serve to enhance your view of Missouri Southern State University by providing you with more timely features and information from around campus.

And without really planning it, we discovered that many of the stories we worked on for this new issue of Crossroads shared a common element: perspective.

On the following pages, you’ll meet Noppadol Paothong, a 2001 graduate and award-winning photographer whose keen eye for the natural world has earned him international acclaim.

You’ll join new members of the faculty at Missouri Southern as they receive a guided tour of Joplin to learn about the city’s history and visit points of interest. Also, you’ll catch up with former astronaut Janet Kavandi, who now serves as director of the NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland. (Logging more than 530 Earth orbits is bound to shape your view of the world.)

And if you haven’t already, make plans to visit campus to catch a rare glimpse of artist Edvard Munch’s photography. This exhibit marks only the second time his photography has been on display to the public.

As always, we want you to share your perspective with us: news, photos, story ideas or feedback on this publication. You can email us any time at crossroads@mssu.edu.

Thanks for reading, and we’ll catch up with you again this winter!

Editor

Crossroads Magazine
Missouri Southern State University

MSSU is seeking comments from the public about the university in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency. The university will host a visit on Feb. 4-5, 2019, from a team of peer reviewers representing the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The team will review the institution’s ongoing ability to meet HLC’s criteria for accreditation. MSSU has been accredited by HLC since 1949.

Comments must be in writing and must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs.

Submit comments to HLC at hlcommission.org/comment or mail them to the address below. All comments must be received by Jan. 7, 2019.

Public Comment on MSSU | Higher Learning Commission
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500 | Chicago, IL 60604-1411





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A NOTE FROM THE

PRESIDENT

DR. ALAN D. MARBLE, CLASS OF 1979

"To reach a port, we must set sail – sail, not tie at anchor – sail, not drift."

The quote comes from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the final line from an April 1938 "fireside chat" broadcast to the American people. His words offered an assurance during uncertain times – that abandoning this nation's purpose or simply looking for expedient solutions would be to "miss the tide and perhaps to miss the port."

"I propose to sail ahead," our 32nd president said.

Given FDR's passion for sailing, the nautical-themed resolve shown in that particular passage should come as no surprise. It struck me as a particularly apt metaphor as we chart a course forward here at Missouri Southern. As an institution, we're looking to the horizon at a time when the world of higher education is in uncertain waters.

It's not enough to simply keep this ship of ours afloat, or to just lazily drift along on the strength of past successes.

Our destination will always be the "next level" shores. And by that I mean improving what Missouri Southern can offer in terms of service, graduate outcomes, commitment to our mission, support for our students, and our overall development as a university.

This would be impossible without the invaluable input from our faculty and staff here at MSSU. Their participation in a series of stakeholder engagement sessions and online surveys provided a star to help steer the Strategic Planning process and as our Board of Governors shaped a new strategic plan:

Missouri Southern State University will be a leader in offering relevant undergraduate and graduate programs that fulfill the educational needs of each student.

Our vision for the future is to be the "University of Choice" for students, faculty and staff; create transformative experiences through innovative programs; to promote a culture of excellence; to engage in high-quality scholarly activities; and to always seek to grow and thrive.

The mission and vision are both guided by our values. Simply, we believe in service, integrity, respect, transparency, global perspectives, community, responsibility and accountability, diversity and inclusion, and broad-based learning.

Think of each of these markers as a lighthouse beacon by which we will navigate as we all set sail for the future.

Enjoy this issue of Crossroads, and thank you for the continued support offered by members of our Lion family. It's an exciting time at Missouri Southern, and I'm eager to continue this journey with you.

Alan D. Marble

ROARS HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD

Next time you're on vacation – whether it be overseas or just a fun day trip – take a selfie in your MOSO gear or with your alma mater swag and send it to us at AlumniAssoc@mssu.edu. We'll share your photo on social media. All entries will be eligible for a monthly drawing for a Missouri Southern hanging travel bag!

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produced by the
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Cassie Mathes
Director

Mike Olmstead
Brett Lyerla
Scott Meeker
Brian Mehrens
Curtis Almeter
Brad Belk
Ashley Eriksen
Chloe McMains
Daya Davenport
Megan Vest

Student Assistants
Mackenzie Marshall
Emily Evans
Mary Beth Strong
Abby West
Maddy West
Veronica Gazaway

Special Contributors
Kevin Greim
Chelsea Conley
Lee Elliff Pound
Meagan Adams
Justin Maskus

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VOICES OF SOUTHERN

RYAN DRENDEL, senior English-Professional/
Technical Writing and Spanish major

Going into the summer, Ryan Drendel says he didn't know much about the health care industry.

But the senior – who is double majoring in English-Professional/Technical Writing and Spanish – got a crash course as the first student from Missouri Southern accepted into the HealthStream internship program. Based in Nashville, HealthStream develops learning products for healthcare organizations, and provides internships to students from elite schools all over the country.

Dr. Richard Miller toured HealthStream last year as part of his role to find new internship opportunities. He came back really excited about the company and was looking for someone to send a resume their way.

He got in contact with me about it. I didn't have plans for the summer yet so I applied and had an interview a couple weeks later, and then they extended an offer. I really appreciated his role in finding this internship.

HealthStream was great in that it gave us a little bit of flexibility to work on multiple projects at the same time. I was technically a Human Resources intern. I did a lot of paperwork when new-hires came in. But they also gave me a lot of writing projects, such as award applications for some of the software that HealthStream creates. A lot of it was boiling down really technical details about software into an application that can be read by anyone.

HealthStream is a big player in compliance and workforce development, and they have offices all over the country. There was never a dull moment, but I like

being busy. It was exciting to have the opportunity to work for them.

Drendel's time with HealthStream wasn't the first internship opportunity to allow him to develop his writing skills.

I can't say enough good things about Dr. Joey Brown. She has been really flexible in allowing me to gain internship credits in professional and technical writing. She sees the value in internships and gaining real-life experience, and she's a really great teacher.

Last summer, I did an internship with the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Ariz. I wrote a booklet about the Discovery Channel Telescope, their newest and most expensive telescope. They wanted a document they can share with visitors.

Not long after completing his internship with HealthStream, Drendel headed south of the border for the fall semester.

At the end of my freshman year, I went on a trip to Paris and London that was led by Dr. Dustin Faulstick. It was awesome and it really made me want to study abroad for a whole semester.

I'm studying at the Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla. It's in Pueblo City, Mexico. I'm here to learn Spanish by immersing myself, and taking a lot of Latin American literature classes.

I'll be applying this fall for grad school. Becoming an English professor is something I'd really love to do.



LYNN

CAMPUS HEARS INSPIRING 'WELCOME BACK' MESSAGE

Nicole Lynn opened with the story of a young girl.

It was the story of a girl from Tulsa, Okla., who grew up in poverty; who often didn't know where her next meal would come from; for whom the donation of a winter coat meant the world.

It was also the story of a girl who faced challenges head on; who strove to exceed expectations; who built lasting relationships that helped to define her.

It was a deeply personal story, and one Lynn hoped could help inspire those who gathered for the All-Employee Welcome Back meeting, held in Taylor Performing Arts Center the Friday before the Fall semester started. It was a chance for Missouri Southern's faculty and staff to hear campus updates from administration before Lynn offered her inspiring message.

A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Lynn worked as a financial analyst on Wall Street before becoming one of the youngest female

sports agents in the industry. She signed her first client at age 26 and has represented players from the Denver Broncos, Oakland Raiders and Washington Redskins.

As someone for whom the "education system was a way up out of poverty," Lynn's story was one well-suited to share in a higher-education setting. Faculty members, she said, have the opportunity to change the trajectory of their students' lives.

Her presentation to campus focused on three points: never count anyone out; be empathetic and build relationships; and be mindful that the small things can make a big difference.

"I had some professors – and even high-school and elementary teachers – who were very instrumental in my growth as a person," she said. "They were my safe haven, and went above and beyond for someone who didn't have traditional parents.

"I feel so blessed to have the opportunity to tell my story."



NIXON HALL CONTINUES TO TAKE SHAPE

The new home for the mathematics program at MSSU grew at an exponential pace over the summer months.

The steel skeleton for the three-story Nixon Hall and the skywalk connecting it to Reynolds Hall quickly took shape as crews from Crossland Construction continued work ahead of the building's projected Spring 2019 opening.

The skywalk will provide plenty of natural light for students making their way to and from classes, as will the atrium, which will extend all the way to the building's third story.



YOURS TO LOSE WELCOMES NEW COHORT OF PRE-MED STUDENTS

The start of the Fall 2018 semester brought with it the second cohort for the Yours to Lose Advanced Medical School Acceptance Program.

Students were welcomed with a special Green Coat Ceremony. They were introduced individually, formally signing their names into a register and slipping into the green lab coats worn by Missouri Southern YTL students.

“Being a doctor is one of the most rewarding and valued professions in our society,” said Dr. Marsi Archer, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. “You are about to embark on the first step of your journey into the medical field. We’re proud of you and thrilled to have you here at Missouri Southern.”

The future med-school students will face a challenging curriculum as they work to earn their bachelor’s degrees in biology through an accelerated three-year program before making the transition to the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences’ Joplin campus.

LAW ENFORCEMENT FIRING RANGE RECEIVES MAJOR UPGRADE

Travis Walthall isn’t sure exactly how old the former equipment was in the Law Enforcement Academy’s indoor firing range.

“But when I went to school here in 1994, it was in-place then and had been for quite some time,” says Walthall, the Law Enforcement Continuing Education Coordinator and range master. “It was getting worn out to the point that when we needed a part to fix something, we had to call the company that made it. A year ago, they told us they didn’t have parts for the old equipment anymore.”

A long-needed renovation to the firing range was completed and ready for students to use when the Fall 2018 semester began. Using the latest technology, nine lanes have been installed on the range as part of the \$250,000 project. Space is available to eventually add two more lanes.

“The range now has an iPad-like control system,” he says. “An instructor or individual shooter can control each lane from their booth. Or, every lane can be controlled at the same time by an instructor on their iPad or from a desktop computer. It can do whatever we need it to do.”

MICHAEL SANDERS JOINS SOUTHERN AS DEAN OF ADMISSIONS

The Admissions Department at Missouri Southern is under new leadership with the hiring of Michael Sanders as the university’s new Dean of Admissions.

Sanders, who comes to Missouri Southern with more than 12 years of higher education and recruitment experience, previously served as the Director of Recruitment at the University of Idaho, where he supervised a team of 15 recruiters for the four-campus institution.

“What drew me to this position was the opportunity to work alongside the faculty, staff and administration here who have a deep and vested interest in student access to higher education and their success therein,” Sanders said. “I look forward to enhancing the recruitment processes that have already been established at Missouri Southern.”

Prior to his role at the University of Idaho, Sanders served as Assistant Director of Recruitment and Academic Services at Arizona State University, focusing specifically on building relationships with community colleges.

In March, he was named vice-chair of the Recruiting and Marketing Committee of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. The association is comprised of more than 2,600 institutions in more than 40 countries.

Sanders replaces Derek Skaggs, who retired from the position after 21 years of service to Missouri Southern.





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ANNUAL MISSOURI SOUTHERN NIGHT AT THE ROYALS GAME

MSSU ALUMNI EVENT AT FLYING TEE GOLF IN TULSA



NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR LION-HEARTED & SPIRIT OF SERVICE AWARDS

Nominations are being accepted for the Lion-Hearted and Spirit of Service Awards, which will be announced in February 2019. Established in 2000, the **Lion-Hearted Award** is presented to an individual who embodies the true heart and soul of Lion Spirit and has made significant contributions to the institution, either through monetary or voluntary assistance. Nominees can but do not have to be graduates of MSSU.

The **Spirit of Service Award** is given to an alum in recognition of outstanding contributions to their community through service and advocacy. Nominees can be active in any community and are not confined to the immediate Joplin and Missouri Southern areas. Help us recognize outstanding community service!

To submit a nomination online, visit www.mssu.edu/alumni and click the "Recognition Awards" tab.





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Action 12 News

ANDY SEARCY

2001 Graduate of Missouri Southern State University



Former Lion returns to Joplin as part of documentary

For the first time in more than 20 years, Cord Newman found himself under the Friday night lights of a football field.

In May, Newman – an actor and stuntman – made a late-evening stop at Missouri Southern’s Fred Hughes Stadium with a documentary crew in tow to shoot footage as part of a new project. While he only played for the Lions for one season in 1995, he said his time at MSSU was a formative period.

“It wasn’t a very long run, but it’s one that has impacted me every single day,” he said. “I was incredibly thankful to meet people like (then assistant football coach) Dan Scheible, and I also made the best friend I’ve had since I was 17 while here.”

Newman, who made his first on-screen appearance as an extra in the 1998 film “There’s Something About Mary,” has had a lengthy career working in the stunt industry. His credits include “Bad Boys II,” “2 Fast 2 Furious,” “Transporter 2” and “Miami Vice.” He helped set a record in 2006 for the world’s fastest couch on the MTV series “Call to Greatness.”

“We shortened the frame of a Chevy pickup and put a Barcalounger over the rear axle and moved the steering back there,” he said. “We also added two loveseats and a big entertainment center. We got it up to 93 mph on a landing strip at the El Toro air station.”

His most recent appearance on screen came in the movie “6-Headed Shark Attack,” which debuted last month on SyFy.

Newman is one of the founders of the International Film Fund, which will donate half of the proceeds from its projects to programs promoting cancer research. The documentary is one of their first efforts.

“We’re taking a cross country drive – from Daytona Beach, Fla., to Long Beach, Calif. – to see the heart and soul of America,” he said.

He and his crew made the stop in Joplin after filming at Graceland in Memphis, Tenn. He was having some repairs made to his Ford Mustang Shelby GT350, and thanked Joplin’s Frank Fletcher Ford for making another car available for the footage they shot at Missouri Southern.

“It was real Midwestern hospitality,” said Newman.

The documentary project has already attracted interest from several distributors, he said.





'one step
away from

Realitiy'

Spiva celebrates photography of Edward
munch

More than a century before someone coined the term “selfie,” Edvard Munch was turning the camera on himself.

While Munch is best known in pop culture as the artist behind “The Scream” – that expressionistic visage pictured mid-shriek – his photography is only just now beginning to receive its critical due. And currently, the Spiva Art Gallery at Missouri Southern is the only place to see it.

It is only the second time “The Experimental Self – Edvard Munch’s Photography” has been on public exhibit. The exhibition has been organized by the American-Scandinavian Foundation / Scandinavia House in partnership with the Munch Museum, Oslo. It was originally presented at Scandinavia House: The Nordic Center in America from Nov. 21, 2017, to April 7, 2018.

On loan from the Munch Museum in Oslo, Norway, the exhibit features 46 of Munch’s photographs. It was curated by Dr. Patricia Berman, a professor of art history at Wellesley College. Dr. Thor Mednick, an associate professor of art history at the University of Toledo, helped secure the exhibit for the Spiva gallery.

The Missouri Arts Council provided financial assistance to bring the exhibit to Missouri Southern. The Katherine L. Hyde Charitable Trust served as presenting partner, with Cynthia Schwab and UMB Bank as supporting partners. Ron Anderson, Commerce Bank and Charles Kemp were supporters.

“It wasn’t supposed to travel,” says Frank Pishkur, head of Southern’s Art Department. “But we figured it couldn’t hurt to dream big and ask.”

Known best for his paintings and printmaking, Munch began experimenting with photography around the mid-point of his career, Pishkur says.

The photos featured in the exhibit often feature Munch as his own subject, utilizing unique angles, blurred motion and distortion techniques to create very atmospheric images.

“Photography was an up-and-coming thing, and cameras were becoming smaller and smaller,” says Pishkur. “He started taking self-portraits. A lot of his artwork was based on portraits of himself.

“He didn’t care about taking the perfect photograph. He was completely different than everyone else doing photography at the time in that his works are based off a really expressive distortion effect. It’s more of an emotional, mental landscape ... a reality that’s one step away from reality.”

Christine Bentley, director of the Spiva gallery, said photography was primarily seen as something of a hobby at the end of the 19th century, which makes Munch’s experimentation with the form even more fascinating.



MUNCH'S MOVIES

Munch's short films can best be described as the charming experiments of an amateur, but one with a long-term analytical exploration of motion in art and photography. Electrified by cinema when his friend Halvdan Nobel Rohde opened a movie house in Kristiania in 1911, Munch had even announced his intention of opening his own cinema. The abrupt sequences that he shot both mirror popular cinema, in the artist's Charlie Chaplin turn, and explore the kind of mobilized urban industrial aesthetic of Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929).

Munch shot his “home movies” in the summer of 1927 using a Pathé-Baby camera that he had purchased in Paris. The portable device, which had come on the market in 1922 (Munch's apparatus was the second release, from between 1925 and 1926), had helped to spark a surge of amateur home movie making internationally. The 9.5 mm projector

“It’s the way he created the composition ... the way he experimented with the placement of self within the photograph,” she says.

Still, at the time, the photos would have been considered little more than “sketches.” “They wouldn’t have been put on display. It wasn’t seen as art at that time.”

The timing of the exhibit coincides with MSSU’s celebration of the Nordic Semester, and Pishkur said Missouri Southern is extremely lucky to be able to showcase it.

“I don’t know if we’ve ever showcased a historically, internationally known artist here,” he says. “Most university galleries never feature this level of an artist.

“The closest you might get to it is Crystal Bridges in Arkansas, but that’s only American art. So then you’d be looking possibly at the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City.”

The exhibit will continue through Oct. 19. Admission to the gallery is free and open to the public. Hours for the exhibit are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.



ICONIC IMAGES



Noppadol Paothong, '01,
joins elite ranks of
conservation photographers



It's more than just taking a pretty picture — the image needs to tell a story. It needs to have meaningful impact.

When Noppadol Paothong applied for membership into the International League of Conservation Photographers (ILCP), he knew the process would challenge him.

“It’s an exclusive group of photographers,” the 2001 graduate said of the ILCP. “Most of them are world-famous, and have been featured in National Geographic. The application and review process takes four or five months, and the requirement wall is very high.”

Founded in 2005, the organization accepts the world’s most elite wildlife, nature and culture photographers who “in addition to displaying remarkable photographic skills, have each demonstrated a deep commitment to conservation efforts around the world.”

Paothong is too modest to not laugh a bit when asked what it feels like to be considered an “elite” photographer.

But for those familiar with his work, it’s a well-earned description.

A native of Thailand, Paothong came to the United States and enrolled as a student at North Idaho College in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, where he began shooting photos for the school newspaper. In 1998, he was recruited by Dr. Chad Stebbins to attend Missouri Southern, where he became photo editor for *The Chart*.

As someone who had always been “a wildlife photographer by heart,” Paothong says he wasn’t sure what his new home would have to offer.

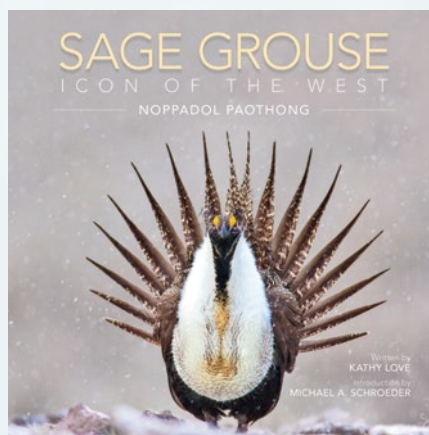
“I began wandering around and discovered all of the nature and beauty in Missouri,” he says. “It’s very rich in natural resources and wildlife.”

Paothong, who graduated in 2001 with a communications degree, served as a staff photographer for the *Joplin Globe* for five years, and later at the *Springfield News-Leader*. Since 2006, his keen eye

for nature has been showcased within the pages of *The Missouri Conservationist*, a publication of the Missouri Department of Conservation.

In 2012, he published “Save the Last Dance,” which capped a decade-long project to capture stunning images of the North American grassland grouse. He spent the next five years work on a spin-off published last fall – “Sage Grouse: Icon of the West.”

“I wanted to focus on a single species,” he says. “I didn’t want to try to be political but showcase its history and connect the past to the present – from the Native Americans and early pioneers to the present – and show the biodiversity of the West. By protecting one species, we’re also protecting more than 300 others.”



The book has earned several national awards including a grand prize from the 2018 Next Generation Indie Book Awards and a bronze medal from the Independent Publisher Book Awards in the Environment/Ecology/Nature category.

For Stebbins, watching Paothong’s photography skills develop since leaving Missouri Southern has been a pleasure.

“I knew he was a good photographer, but I had no idea he would go on to become a world-class photographer and a master of the profession,” he says. “He’s an inspiration to all of us. When he arrived in Idaho from Thailand, he had to take intensive English language classes so that he could survive in a different world.

“He had this incredible talent, but he had to work diligently to improve upon it, refine it and eventually make a living from it.”

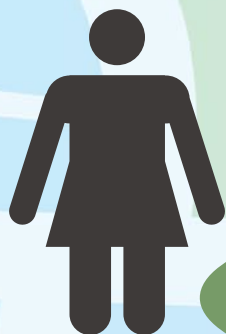
Paothong says he doesn’t plan to immediately jump into another book project — though he isn’t completely shutting the door to the idea, either.

“I may stumble on something I’m passionate about like this project,” he says. “I’ll continue to be an advocate for wildlife and something will come around.”



GUIDED TOUR

Inaugural event allows
new faculty members
to explore Joplin,
city history





Having spied the piano in the corner of the social room at the Scottish Rite Cathedral, Dr. Canes Nicolas makes a beeline to identify the manufacturer.

It's a Conover — a model that Missouri Southern's new assistant professor of music isn't familiar with.

"I have to try this," he says, sitting down at the small bench and improvising a classical-sounding tune.

Something isn't right, though. The notes have a muffled quality. Nicolas stands in order to carefully inspect the piano, quickly discovering that the top of the instrument opens, revealing a hidden stand for sheet music. Now open, music from the piano quickly fills the room with the rich tones one would expect.

It's a moment of discovery for the Haiti native, who comes to Missouri Southern from Southern Utah University. And while it's on a small scale, discovery is what this day is all about.

Nearly all of the university's 30 new faculty members gathered for the afternoon a week before the start of the fall semester for a tour of Joplin — a first-ever event designed to give new arrivals a chance to get acquainted with the community, its history and locations of interest.

Following lunch at Instant Karma Gourmet Hot Dogs, the group took a walking tour of downtown. Stops included the former Fox Theater — now home to Central Christian Center, where they were welcomed by Mayor Gary Shaw — the Newman Building, the former Joplin Public Library and the Scottish Rite Cathedral.

The new faculty members then boarded a bus for destinations such as the Joplin Museum Complex, the new KCU medical school, the tornado memorial in Cunningham Park and a brief hike along a bluff near Wildcat Park to visit Mother Nature's Crack. The tour ended with a stop at the garage apartment where Bonnie and

Clyde's gang briefly hid and had a shootout with officers from the Joplin Police Department.

"It's great that they're offering this," says Nicolas, adding he's surprised it was the first time for the tour. "It would be good even for people who already live here."

Dr. Jordan Baumbach, an Iowa native who joined the biology and environmental health faculty as an assistant professor, says she enjoyed learning about the city's mining heritage. Dr. Kyle Gustafson, who comes to Missouri Southern from the University of Wyoming, is among those who took time to learn more about the deadly May 22, 2011, tornado during the visit to the memorial area at Cunningham.

Brad Belk, Missouri Southern's community historian, offered perspective on each location's significance along the way.

"Joplin is fortunate to have some outstanding historical buildings to tour," says Belk. "All of these structures uniquely define Joplin's personality."

The tour is a way to "step up" how new faculty members are welcomed to campus, says Dr. Wendy McGrane, associate vice president for academic affairs and vice provost.

"We wanted to focus on things that were unique to Joplin," she says. "Even if you've lived here, lots of these places you may not know about. It's an informal way for people to get to know each other, learn a little bit about Missouri Southern and Joplin, and then kick off the school year."



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'I HAVE TO LIVE ON'

Freshman Trenton Stephenson fights back after accident

Fifteen months later, the details of May 11, 2017 are still a mystery.

A red Mustang flew off Interstate 44 from a precipitous height, flipping at least once on the way down and leaving Trenton Stephenson with no memory of the event or of anything that occurred in the two weeks that followed.

Stephenson was set to walk the stage with his high-school graduating class just nine days later. Instead, the former Neosho athlete spent his last week of school in a hospital bed with a traumatic brain injury (TBI), sternal and rib fractures, a cervical cord hematoma, a subarachnoid hemorrhage and a scalp laceration.

He had to learn how to walk and talk all over again.

"I used to run every day; I did cross-country and track," he says. "Now I'm unable to run or my TBI will actually get worse. I can't have any kind of jarring, so I can't be on bumpy car rides, go on a boat at all or ever go on a roller coaster again."

While he missed prom, he graduated high school from his hospital room. The vice-principal of Neosho High School made a point to visit and hand-deliver his diploma.

Obstacles aside, this Lion is determined to push through and accomplish the goals he had set before the accident, including his recent induction to the Pride. He started his first semester at Missouri Southern this fall.



"I'm taking my classes online this semester," he says. "If I do well, they'll allow me to go full-time next semester, on-campus."

Stephenson says it has been a struggle learning to study again.

"They tested my memory and it's right above the disability line, which means it's terrible," he says. "I can't remember a darn thing, so studying has been a huge struggle for me."

While there will be challenges when it comes to acclimating himself to university life, Stephenson says he's ready for whatever comes his way.

"I just decided right then and there [after the accident] that I have to live on. I can never go back and change it, so why not adapt to the way it is now and move on?" he says. "If you keep focusing on the past, you can never move forward."



GIANT LEAPS FOR MANKIND

NASA'S **DR. JANET KAVANDI, '80,**
TALKS NEXT GENERATION OF SPACE TRAVEL

It's a sobering view, seeing Planet Earth from space. The effects of deforestation and air pollution, the melting of ice sheets. From 200 miles above, one can see it all.

On the other hand, it's also breathtaking. There's the majesty of a sunrise, the outlines of the continents, and powerful storms moving over the surface.

"It's hard to express, and I wish people could see it so they could understand the beauty and fragility of our planet," says Dr. Janet Kavandi.

A veteran of three Space Shuttle missions (33 days in space, 13.1 million miles and 535 Earth orbits, to be exact) and a 1980 graduate of Missouri Southern, Kavandi still can't suppress the smile of a young girl who once dreamed of traveling through space.

"I wanted to work for NASA since I was a child," she says. "I wanted to fly in space. That was the ultimate goal any human being could have, in my opinion, so I'm very fortunate."

IGNITION SEQUENCE

It was a big dream for the former Carthage resident, who says she was drawn to "Star Trek" and almost anything having to do with space travel and exploration.

"I knew what I would ultimately like to do, but I wasn't sure it was a possible reality at the time," she says. Still, she never took her eye off of the possibilities the future held.

"I had a favorite instructor in high school in Carthage, who inspired me to start thinking about a degree in chemistry. I also liked astronomy and archeology, but I thought chemistry might offer the best and most practical sort of career for someone who was interested in the sciences."

She soon found a home in Missouri Southern's chemistry department. She cites the late Dr. Larry Albright and Dr. Melvyn Mosher as inspiring her to keep shooting for the stars.

Kavandi kept up a fast-paced schedule, putting her on track obtain her bachelor's degree in chemistry in three years. Describing herself as "the studious type," there wasn't much in the way of down time on campus, although she did meet her husband, John, in the dorms.

After leaving MSSU, Kavandi pursued her master's degree at the University of Missouri-Rolla and her Ph.D. from the University of Washington-Seattle. Her career took her from Joplin's Eagle-Picher Industries to Boeing before NASA selected her as an astronaut candidate in 1994.





She served as a mission specialist aboard the Discovery in 1998, docking with the Russian Space Station Mir. The Endeavour in 2000 found Kavandi and the other crew members using a new launch system to produce a high-resolution digital topography of the Earth's surface. Her final mission came in 2001 aboard the Atlantis, which traveled to the International Space Station for maintenance and the installation of a new airlock.

Back on Earth, her career with NASA continued to flourish. She served as deputy chief of the Astronaut Office, and later as deputy director and then director of Flight Crew Operations at Johnson Space Center.

'SPACE IS ALWAYS A MYSTERY'

Today, as director of NASA's John H. Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio, Kavandi still holds fast to the mysteries, possibilities and grand vision for the future of human space travel.

One of 10 NASA centers across the country, and one of just four dedicated to research, the Glenn Center helps pave the way for space flight and aeronautics. From critical work on power supplies, propulsion and communications systems, the center serves as a high-tech test facility for current and next generation spacecraft.

Take the Orion, for example.

A model of the spacecraft sits behind Kavandi in the conference room just down the hall from her office in the center's administrative wing. The bullet-shaped capsule will serve as the springboard for mankind's next push into the final frontier.

"We're also in the first stages of planning an orbiting platform around the moon, and designing the propulsion element for an eventual habitat," she says. "From there, landers will make routine excursions to the moon's surface."

"Ultimately, we'll take that platform and use it to push on to Mars from there. It's a really good plan to test out our systems on the surface of the moon, which is only four days away. If something breaks, we can bring it back home to see why it broke, fix it and make it more robust for when we take it to Mars, which is much farther away – a whole year."

"We'll create a habitat on Mars. Beyond that, our probes can take us even deeper into our own solar system."

But first, the Orion will be the centerpiece of Exploration

Mission-1 (EM-1), an unmanned mission that will push the envelope by traveling farther than any other spacecraft thus far – thousands of miles beyond the moon over the course of its three-week flight.

The Glenn Center's research facility, which includes the world's largest vacuum chamber, is putting the Orion through a battery of tests designed to make EM-1 a reality.

But not all of the work done by the 3,200 scientists and engineers employed at the center is focused on the stars.

Given its position directly adjacent to Cleveland Hopkins International Airport, it's hard to forget the center's importance to the future of aeronautics in general. Research conducted at the facility is paving the way for the craft that will take the general populace from Point A to Point B.

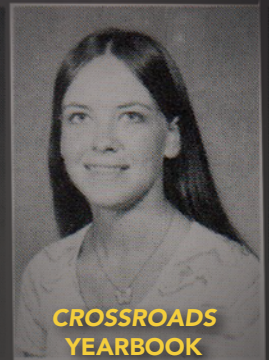
"A lot of the testing going on here is on the aeronautics side," says Kavandi. "We're looking at hybrid electric aircraft design, and possibly fully electric aircraft design. We're also researching energy storage, power distribution systems and more energy-efficient regular combustion engines."

As the center's director, she says it's her privilege to supervise operations and manage senior staff to "try to enable all these really intelligent people to do the creative work that allows us to do the groundbreaking things that NASA is known for."

Kavandi says the excitement of playing an integral role in NASA's past, present and future – as an astronaut and now an administrator – hasn't faded.

"Sometimes when you get into the details of doing your daily job you can (momentarily) forget," she says. "But then someone will come up and ask to get a picture with you or talk and it's, 'Oh, that's right ... I did do that.'"

"People still appreciate the specialty of that experience and want to share it with you. Space is always a mystery. As humans, we've only explored a very small part of one solar system and only gone as far as the moon ... one giant leap for mankind, but pretty small steps so far."





GILBERT-SAUNDERS RECEIVES 2018 EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARD

Dr. Lynell Gilbert-Saunders, an associate professor of chemistry at Missouri Southern, was the recipient of the 2018 Governor's Award for Excellence in Education.

The award is presented to an outstanding faculty member from each participating higher education institution in the state. A non-monetary recognition, the award is based on effective teaching, effective advising, service to the university community, commitment to high standards of excellence and success in nurturing student achievement.

"It made me proud that the faculty and students had so much confidence in my abilities," said Gilbert-Saunders. "Teaching is about being able to mentor and communicate effectively with people who are trying to learn. This award validated that for me."

Gilbert-Saunders received her bachelor's degree in chemistry from Missouri Southern in 1998. She received her Ph.D. from Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, and was hired at Missouri Southern in 2006.

"It was like coming home again, but in a different way," she said. "I feel like I'm able to carry on a tradition that was very special and influential to me."

"Dr. Larry Albright, who passed away earlier this year, was my chemistry teacher at Missouri Southern and one of my biggest mentors. I'm honored to be able to pass on the knowledge he gave me to the next generation of students."



ART STUDENT'S WORK SELECTED FOR NATIONAL COMPETITION

Sydney Pierce, a senior studio art candidate from Joplin, recently had an oil painting selected for the 31st annual Northern National Art Competition at Nicolet College, Rhinelander, Wis.

Her painting, "Little Black Submarine," and others selected for the competition, were juried by Mark Steven Greenfield, who served as director of the Watts Towers Arts Center from 1993 - 2002 and the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery from 2004 - 2010. The exhibit, which opens Oct. 1, will run through Nov. 9.

Pierce says much of her artwork focuses on the study of light and how it fills, reflects and illuminates a space.

"It doesn't seem real that something this fascinating can be happening in front of me," she says. "I have to stop what I'm doing and try to record it or [catch] it in the same way I view it."



SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM RECEIVES NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

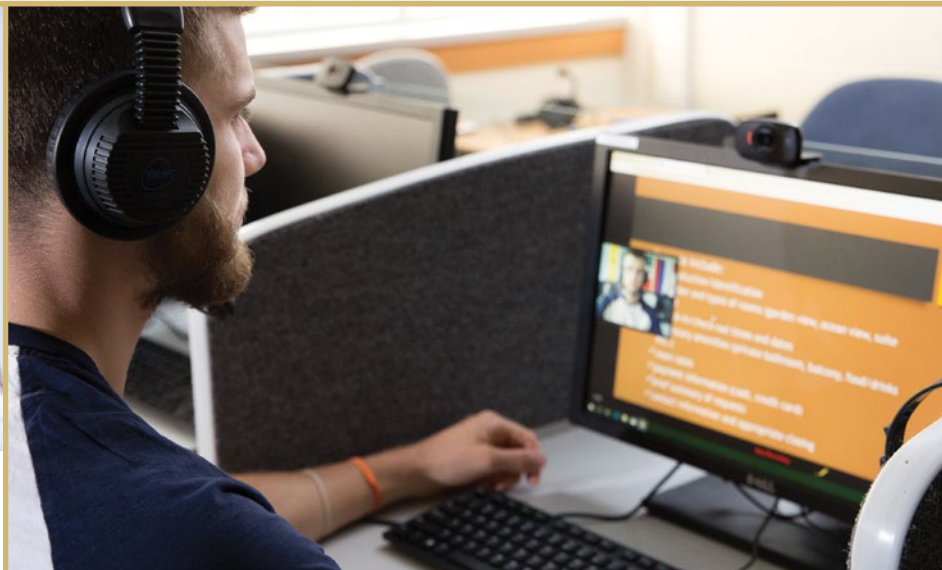
After wearing a candidacy title for three years, Missouri Southern's social work program is now fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

The program received the national accreditation earlier this year, and the designation is retroactive to August of 2015.

"It's very huge for us," says Dr. Renee White, chair of the Social Work Department. "This accreditation in the national realm allows us to have continuity across the country that says if a person walks out with a bachelor's degree in social work, then there is recognition that our students have received at least a minimum set of skills, knowledge and values."

What's more, the program has tripled in size since 2015. Seventy-five students are currently enrolled, with 30 scheduled to graduate in May of 2019.

"Our growth has been phenomenal," said White. "There is a huge demand for bachelor's-level social workers. We receive calls all the time."



MODERN LANGUAGE LAB UNDERGOES RENOVATION

It's been a fixture on the third floor of Webster Hall since the 1990s, and now, the Language Lab across from the International Language Resource Center has undergone its first major renovation since that time. Thanks to \$20,000 in upgrades, the lab is now home to a total of 29 new computers and 29 new voice recorder headsets.

"We really can't thank our IT department enough," said Dr. James Kilpatrick, chair of the Modern Languages Department, crediting the work they've done to keep the lab up and running in years past. He said much-needed improvements to the technology means faster run times, which will benefit students during regular class and on test days.

The project began this summer and was finished in time for the start of the fall semester.



STUDENTS EXPERIENCE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DURING TRIP TO CHINA

At Leggett & Platt's manufacturing plant in Wuxi, China, the delegation from Missouri Southern received a red-carpet welcome.

"They put us on first-class bullet trains to take us there," said Dr. Jeffrey Zimmerman, dean of the Plaster School of Business. "We were met by the company's president of Asia, their executive vice president and director of HR. We got a tour of the facility and spent the day there."

At the invitation of the company's president, the group sat in on a meeting to discuss a \$5 million project.

For the eight students from the Plaster School of Business who traveled to China in May for a chance to see international business practices first-hand, the event was full of eye-opening experiences. The students, led by Zimmerman and Dr. Thomas Schmidt, associate dean, made visits to several companies and had the opportunity to experience Chinese culture.

"Traveling to China was a great experience," said Nathan Teeter, senior marketing and management major. "It was an interesting way to learn outside of the classroom, and to compare and contrast how stores are run."

"In America, we're used to going to Sam's Club to buy in bulk. In China, the store is [marketed toward] the middle and upper-class. With TVs for example, you might find five or six different brands at an American store. There, you'll find no more than one or two of highest-quality brands."

The group also had the chance to visit the Forbidden City, the Great Wall of China and a breeding facility for giant pandas.

Zimmerman said he wants to make international travel a priority for more of his business students.

"I want them to go to non-English-speaking countries, spend some time there and see how business is done," he said.

Having never traveled abroad before, Teeter said he was a bit nervous at the outset but found it to be a rewarding experience.

"My biggest takeaway is that there are a lot of opportunities out there in the world that I didn't recognize," he said. "This trip broadened my horizons, and has led me to be interested in becoming involved in the international market."

CORNELL AUDITORIUM RENOVATION AMONG PSB IMPROVEMENTS

Students stepping back into Plaster Hall's Cornell Auditorium this fall found a completely renovated space.

Work began on the renovation project just two days after spring commencement ceremonies and was completed in time for the start of the new semester. Designed by Paragon Architecture, the 250-seat auditorium now features wood flooring, new carpeting, and lighting converted to LED. Space has also been created in the lobby area to host special events.

The auditorium renovation project isn't the only upgrade for the School of Business this year. Thanks to the generosity of donors, a new endowed professorship has been created, while a classroom received a complete cosmetic renovation.

Bob Corley, a longtime supporter of Missouri Southern, provided the lead gift to establish the W. Robert Corley Endowed Professorship in Marketing. The endowment, which had five major donors, will be used to attract and retain outstanding professors to teach marketing courses.

A gift from Dr. Beverly Block has been used to renovate Room 318 and establish the Block Interpersonal Development Room. Improvements include new furniture, enhanced Wi-Fi and artwork which emphasizes the soft communication skills employers consistently look for in business majors.



ACCOUNTING PROGRAM RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The accounting program at Missouri Southern has been recognized as one of the most affordable in the country by Accounting EDU, a website created to help students and professionals in all 50 states connect with high-quality programs.

Noting the program's flexibility, convenience and accessibility, and the CPA first-time exam pass rate, the publication made it their only selection for the state of Missouri for 2018-19.

"We love this program's focus on personalized instruction, and the emphasis faculty place on student engagement," the editors noted. "It's no wonder that U.S. News & World Report recently named Missouri Southern State University one of the top 10 most affordable schools in the U.S.!"



LION CUB ACADEMY RECOGNIZED FOR DESIGN WORK

The American School and University magazine selected Missouri Southern's Lion Cub Academy as one of the Outstanding Design recipients for the 2018 Educational Interiors Showcase.

The premier competition honoring education interior excellence, the LCA was selected by judges to be among the designs featured in the magazine's August issue.

Designed by Paragon Architecture, the 10,736-square-foot center offers a hands-on learning environment for early childhood education students, helping them learn best-educational practices and to develop appropriate curriculum. The design features a natural outdoor classroom and dedicated spaces for art, music and science.

"We were excited to learn that Paragon received the award," said Nikki Tappana, director of the center. "Our students and the children we care for here have the best facility to enhance their educational experiences."



While the center received recognition for the interior design, the outdoor classroom and equipment are also stand-out features.

There will soon be an addition to the playground equipment offered at the center thanks to a fundraising effort by a local community organization.

The effort to raise \$15,000 for an OmniSpin Spinner was launched this summer by Leadership Joplin. The merry-go-round is designed to be wheelchair and walker accessible. Cody Chaffin, a member of the current Leadership Joplin class, said he was moved to launch a fundraiser for the OmniSpin Spinner after taking a tour of the LCA.

"When I thought on it, the purpose of Leadership Joplin is not only to become more aware of our community but to increase that awareness," Chaffin said. "I thought it was a good idea to challenge myself and others in the Class of 2018 to embrace the spirit of community and see what we could do."



JUNIOR BLOCK RECEIVES CRITICAL TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE

In a world where technological advances refuse to slow down, children navigate cell phones and computers with more ease than their parents, and almost everything is streamlined, teachers need to be on top of more than just their p's and q's.

That's why the School of Education recently decided to provide each of the 76 students enrolled in Junior Block with a brand new Dell laptop.

Junior Block is a group of three required courses – pedagogy, classroom management and microteaching – for admission to the Teacher Education program.

As part of the curriculum, Junior Block students are required to complete a 32-hour internship in a local classroom. Students are expected to be able to plan and deliver two full lessons during this internship, so access to a laptop makes all the difference.

“Our local school districts expect us to graduate candidates who are tech-savvy,” said Susan Craig, interim chair of the Teacher Education Department. “Our faculty introduce students to several different tools. Having a laptop ensures they can work with those tools to successfully apply them to their lessons.”



CERTIFICATES OFFERED IN POPULATION HEALTH, COACHING

The Kinesiology Department has launched new certificate programs for population health and athletic coaching.

Recent shifts within the health care industry – from treatment to prevention – make the population health program extremely relevant. By studying environmental health, aging in relation to health, medical sociology and other health-related topics, students enrolled in the program will learn to develop and implement policies which will improve the health of the population as a whole.

There is also a growing demand for quality interscholastic and youth athletic coaches. The new athletic coaching certificate program aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of to-be coaches, whether they also plan to teach or not.

Students enrolled in this program will study first-aid and safety, practicum in wellness, socio-psychological aspects of physical education and sports, prevention, care and more.



MASTER'S PROGRAMS SEE GROWTH, STUDENT SUCCESS

The master's programs offered through the School of Education are seeing tremendous growth and successful outcomes for graduates.

Enrollment in the Master of Science in Education Administration program for the Fall 2018 semester has doubled since the first cohort in 2016, said Lorinda Hackett, interim dean of the School of Education. All graduates

of the program have passed state assessments and are eligible for DESE Administrator Certification.

The Master of Education in English Language Learners program, which launched in the summer of 2017, will graduate its first cohort in December.

The Master of Science in Education, Curriculum & Instruction program, which launched with a cohort of eight students in 2014, currently has 38 students enrolled.

“We have had 21 graduates so far and have seen a steady increase in enrollment since the beginning,” says Hackett.



SIMULATION CENTER RECEIVES STATE-OF-THE-ART UPGRADES

Game film is nothing new to Caleb Lewis. The former football standout watched quite a bit of it in high school during his playing days for the Seneca (Mo.) Indians, and then again while playing at Missouri Southern.

Now, thanks to \$74,000 in upgrades, the coordinator for the Simulation Center for Interdisciplinary Education (SCICE) at MSSU has helped bring a different type of game film to students in the facility – one that introduces a complete transition from analog to digital technology.

New cameras, microphones, speakers, wiring, monitors and debriefing software are now fixtures in the lab. Southwest Audio-Visual (Springfield, Mo.) and Laerdal Medical Corporation (New York) provided the equipment and its installation.

“When it comes to that software, it allows us to share information across school networks, so it’ll give students and instructors more opportunity to go over what they did and said in class,” said Lewis.

“Basically we had been using technology from 2010. And nobody uses an iPhone from 2010 anymore. Now we’re able to tell students that they’re learning with the most up-to-date, state-of-the-art equipment in simulation education.”

SCICE is located on the third floor of the Julio S. León Health Sciences Building, and offers students a multidisciplinary approach to healthcare education. It provides an environment for students to practice and demonstrate a variety of clinical skills, team training, integrated standardized patients, medical-surgical simulations, disaster/emergency and trauma care training, life support training and long-term care.

The center also gives nurses, respiratory therapists, first-responders and other healthcare providers the opportunity to learn and perfect the latest techniques and best-practices for patient care and safety.



STUDENTS RECEIVE DENTAL HYGIENE SCHOLARSHIP

Two dental hygiene students have been announced as the recipients of the Debbie Thompson Spirit of Dental Hygiene Scholarship.

The scholarship, established four years ago, is awarded annually to a first-year and a second-year student in Missouri Southern's dental hygiene program. This year's recipients are Jacqueline Hernandez, a senior from Webb City, and Frankie Davis, a sophomore from Olpe, Kan.

Thompson, a former member of the program's faculty and a longtime area dental hygienist, says she selects recipients based not only on their academic skills but their dedication to community service. The \$2,500 scholarship will continue into the student's second year if educational standards are maintained.



MSSU AND KCU STUDENTS TO TEAM-UP FOR HEALTH FAIR

Students working toward a career in health care will join with students from the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences-Joplin this fall for a community health fair.

The event is planned for 2 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 8, at Joplin's Northpark Mall. Student-manned stations will be set up to offer screenings such as pulmonary, cardiac, oral cancer and BMI.

"It will be aimed at those in the community who, for whatever reason, have trouble accessing these kinds of services," said Dr. Richard Schooler, dean of the School of Health Sciences. "Education will also be a part of it."

Schooler said the health fair, which will likely become an annual event, will be beneficial for community members and students alike.

"For both universities, intraprofessional education is part of our emphasis," he said. "There will be teams of students from the medical, respiratory and paramedic areas working together to do the screenings. That's the way it's done in the real world."



NURSING STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN POVERTY SIMULATION

Students from the Nursing Department will gain an understanding about the challenges faced by people struggling with poverty during a special event planned for Oct. 12 and Nov. 9.

Developed by the Community Action Agency of Missouri, the poverty simulation will be held at the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences' Joplin campus, and will also include second-year medical students.

According to the 2018 Missouri Poverty Report compiled by Missourians to End Poverty, 12.7 percent of Americans live at or below the poverty level. In Missouri, the poverty rate is 14 percent. With a statewide population of more than 5.9 million, that rate represents more than 826,000 Missourians. Issues related to health care are among the five key areas that impact poverty, according to the study.

Nursing and medical students will be assigned to "families," and will then have to work together to complete tasks necessary to support themselves – such as buying groceries and paying bills – while facing real-life obstacles such as the loss of a job or transportation issues. Volunteers working at tables will represent businesses or organizations such as a bank, mortgage company or school. Every 15 minutes will represent a week in the families' lives, with the simulation lasting four weeks.

Groups will then come together to discuss the challenges they faced and how the simulation relates to health care, as well as ways that health care providers can work with patients who are facing poverty.

The Road Less



TRAVELED



**Amy Rekart, '08, follows through
with dream to break away from the 9 to 5**



We were just kind of getting bored with the status quo and needed some more adventure,” says Amy Rekart.

Many people dream of finding a way to get away from it all, but Rekart and her husband recently decided to follow through with that dream. The couple resolved to break free from the 9 to 5 and hit the road.

Rekart, who played soccer for Missouri Southern for four years and graduated in 2008 with a degree in education, considers herself a free spirit with a passion for health, physical education and adventure. For the last 10 years, she has lived and worked in St. Louis as a P.E. teacher while her husband, Matt, worked as an insurance underwriter.

“It sounds a little cliché, but we wanted to live life to the fullest,” she says. “We’d rather have experiences than material things.”

When her husband was approved to work remotely, they decided to rent out their home, purchase an RV and see where the road took them.

So far, it has led to a lot of national parks.

Since leaving St. Louis in the rearview mirror, they’ve visited Yellowstone, the Badlands, Mount Rushmore and the Grand Teton National Park. The road ahead of them, she says, will include visits to parks in Alaska, Washington, Oregon and Canada.

“It’s amazing how many free camp sites there are around the country,” says Rekart. “We just had an incredible, beautiful spot on a cliff at Yellowstone overlooking the mountains.”

While her husband had a scary moment involving a rampaging buffalo at Yellowstone, she says the reality of leaving things behind was even scarier.

“The scariest thing for me was definitely quitting my job,” she says. “I did summer school all summer – it was the best gig ever to earn some extra money before we left. It was an online health position and I was thinking, ‘Wow, I could do this on the road.’”

Wanting to still stay connected, they purchased a wireless antenna for the top of their RV to reduce their chances of losing service on the road.

“My download speeds were actually faster when we were in the national forest and at Grand Teton than in our old (office) environment,” says Matt.

The couple say they have loved every minute of their journey and would recommend taking the leap to those who are considering their own great escape. It just takes a little planning, perseverance and commitment to follow through, Rekart says.

“A lot of people are doing this,” she says. “They’re figuring it out, you know? It sounds simple, but just do it. There are so many things that can hold you back, but you just have to have focus – ‘We’re going to do it.’”



LIONS ATHLETICS



DONOR-FUNDED VIDEO BOARD MAKES BIG IMPRESSION

Board Becomes Third Largest in Division II

Until Saturday, Sept. 8, MSSU football fans had only a couple of options to catch a replay of a long touchdown run or a game-changing quarterback sack: either wait to see it later that night on a local television station or wait for KGCS to re-air the game the next day.

That restriction changed during this season's home opener when fans finally got to see the new donor-funded video board in action by enjoying the larger-than-life visuals.

As promised, the \$1.3 million project, and third largest video board in NCAA Division II athletics, was finished in time for the Lions' game against Lindenwood.

The board stands 63 feet high and is 90 feet wide. The video display itself is 30 feet high and 66 feet wide. With 718,000 pixels, it provides an amazing viewing experience and offers game-day action, interactive fan

prompts and live scoring data. It also utilizes a built-in sound system to provide an optimal audio experience throughout the stadium.

The Missouri Southern Foundation partnered on the project with Nevco, a national leader in video board development.

"It represents quality," said Scott Boudreaux, president of the Foundation's board of directors. "I think it says to the folks that are coming to this university on a game day, or otherwise, that the Foundation cared about enhancing the lives of coaches, students and sponsors. As a Foundation board, we felt like this was an absolute must to keep pushing forward."

Donors for the project include People's Bank of Seneca, Freeman Health System, Liberty Utilities, Missouri Eagle, PepsiCo and RE Smith Construction. Representatives from each company were recognized during halftime of the home opener.





HECKEMEYER NAMED WINNER OF PRESTIGIOUS KEN B. JONES AWARD

Allie Heckemeyer, a track and field standout and recent Missouri Southern graduate, was recently named the MIAA Ken B. Jones Award winner as the top female student-athlete in the MIAA.

The Ken B. Jones Award goes annually to the league's top male and female student-athlete. Finalists were selected from a field of 12 male nominations and 11 female nominations at various MIAA member schools. A committee of 15 administrators in the MIAA and conference office ranked each nominee to determine the finalist.

Heckemeyer is the third Lion to win the award in its history, joining Shally Lundien (1994-95) and Matt Meyr (2000-01).

She was this year's E.O. and Virginia Humphrey Award winner as the top student-athlete at MSSU. She is a Glen Dolence Award Winner - an honor rewarding leadership - and is also a two-time NCAA Elite 90 Award winner, which goes to the top GPA in the gender at the NCAA Championships site.

Heckemeyer is the school record-holder in the indoor and outdoor triple jump, as well as the indoor pentathlon and outdoor heptathlon. She was All-MIAA this year in four different events, and was the MIAA Champion in the indoor pentathlon and outdoor heptathlon.

She finished third in the heptathlon and sixth in the long jump this year at the NCAA Division II Outdoor Championships, earning All-American honors in each event.

Additionally, Heckemeyer has been active on-campus as a team captain, a member of Catholics on Campus, Delta Kappa and Alpha Chi Honor Societies and K-club. She earned a 4.0 GPA in kinesiology, graduating Summa Cum Laude. She is currently studying for her master's degree at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

SEVEN-YEAR-OLD MAKING 'FANTASTIC' RECOVERY FOLLOWING BASEBALL ACCIDENT

For Dawson Hirshey, Sept. 3 was a major milestone.

That was the day his doctors gave him the OK to start running and jumping again. For a 7-year-old boy, that's huge.

Dawson sustained a serious head injury after being struck in the head by a line drive foul ball during a Missouri Southern baseball game at Joplin's Joe Becker Stadium in April. He was first transported to a Joplin hospital after the accident and then to Children's Mercy in Kansas City for surgery and rehabilitation. He spent more than a month in the hospital and recently underwent surgery to put an artificial prosthesis in place where part of his skull had to be removed.

"He's doing great now," says his mother, Alicia Hughes, Missouri Southern's bursar. "He's done with all his therapies, and there are not a lot of issues or deficits. It was worrying at the time ... even when he was recovering and we were seeing a bunch of progress, it's in the back of your mind. But everything is fantastic."

The second-grader recently had to write about the importance of community and interviewed his mother for the classroom assignment.

"I couldn't express enough how amazing everyone was when he was injured," says Hughes. "It was beyond anything you could imagine. You find out how a really great community invests in others."

Bryce Darnell, Missouri Southern's baseball coach, frequently reaches out to the family to see how Dawson is doing, she says. Team members also presented the family with a signed photo.

"I've had parents of the players message me on Facebook," she says. "Everyone has been so kind."

Dawson will reach another milestone on Oct. 3, when his doctors are expected to clear him to be able to ride his bike and go-kart again.

Despite his ordeal, his mother says he has never once complained.

"He hasn't cried or complained about anything we've gone through," she says. "My husband and I would be like, 'I can't stand another day in the hospital.' But Dawson never even flinches about it. He has, in his mind, rock-star status."

"But he's earned it."

CLASS NOTES

Let us know what's going on in your life!
Email us at alumni@mssu.edu



1970s

Jhan Hurn, '74, is the President/CEO of Community Support Services of Missouri in Joplin.

Dr. Alan Marble, '79, was named Distinguished Alumnus by the Neosho (Mo.) School District.

1980s

Steve Lindsey, '80, is the senior director of security at the University of Phoenix in Phoenix, Ariz.

Kent Thelen, '82, is a Boeing 767 captain/line check airman for Delta Air Lines in Atlanta, Ga.

Margaret Wert-Frazier, '85, is a senior programmer/analyst at Jack Henry & Associates Inc. in Monett, Mo.

Lee Elliff Pound, '86, was re-elected to the Carthage R-IX Board of Education and also re-elected to serve as BOE Secretary.

Jenny, '86, and Troy, '90, Richards' Joplin Building Material was named Small Industry of the Year by Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce.

Shaun LePage, '87, is the associate vice-president of marketing and communications and an assistant professor of ministry studies at Calvary University in Kansas City, Mo.

1990s

Jason Gage, '91, was appointed city manager of Springfield, Mo.

Tiffani Classen, '95, is the director of administration at Wonders of Wildlife Museum and Aquarium in Springfield, Mo.

Casey Greenway, '96, is a member of BKD's IT Risk Services division and has experience managing and performing audit, attestation and consulting engagements with a focus on financial institutions.

Jeremy Brown, '97, was selected as the new executive director of the Ragtag Film Society in Columbia, Mo.

2000s

Ashley (Wolf) Davis, '02, is an associate at Davis CPA Group, LLC in Joplin.

Brandon Davis, '03, is a CPA and owner of Davis CPA Group, LLC in Joplin.

Jeff Woodmansee, '03, is an associate professor of law in the Bowen School of Law at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He was recently named President of Southwest Association of Law Libraries (SWALL) and presented "Legal Research Worldwide" on his teaching experiences as part of the School of U.S. Law partnership with colleagues in Poland and his other international legal education involvement at the SWALL annual meeting.

Jennifer (Hartman) Elfrank, '04, is a senior marketing strategist for DH Pace in Olathe, Kan.

Kasey Cowger, '06, was elected to the Carl Junction School District's Board of Education.

Kyle Rutledge, '06, was named the 2018 NCAA Division II Men's Indoor National Assistant Coach of the Year.

Lesley VanVolkinburg, '07, is the executive director for the OSU Center for Health Sciences in Tulsa, Okla.

Monique Canada, '08, is a certified physician assistant.

Kathleen Cornelius, '08, is a scientist for Pfizer in Chesterfield, Mo.

Phillip Dowden, '08, was named the Heart Sports Information Director of the Year. He serves as the Assistant Athletic Director at Evangel University in Springfield, Mo.

Erin Whelan, '08, is a controller for Nestle Purina in Hartwell, Ga.

Heather (Howe) Box, '09, is a biological science tech for the USDA in Stuttgart, Ark.

Amanda (Littlefield) McCluskey, '09, was recognized for Excellence in Classroom Teaching by Northland Regional Chamber of Commerce. She is teacher for the Smithville (Mo.) School District.

2010s

Nicole (Davis) Kost, '10, is an advanced technical writer for Leggett and Platt Inc. in Carthage, Mo.

Jonathan Russell, '10, was elected to the Neosho School District's Board of Education.

Jentri (White) Whitford, '10, is managing The Zone at The Children's Hospital at Oklahoma University Medical Center. It is a 5,000-square-foot play, learning and art space within the hospital.

Nicole Corcoran, '11, was named Technical and Client Service Coordinator at Bicknell Family Center for the Arts in Pittsburg, Kan.

Markie McCoy, '11, is the athletics game management/promotions and community engagement coordinator at Missouri Southern State University.

Sheryl Arambula, '12, is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Maryland-Baltimore.

Randon Coffey, '12, '18, is the marketing communication & strategy manager at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Clarissa (Essary) Meyer, '12, is the faculty coordinator at Central Texas College at Fort Leonard Wood.

Ashli Turner, '12, is Miss Black Missouri USA 2018 and represented the Show-Me-State in the 2018 Miss Black USA Pageant.

William Gordon, '13, is an environmental health officer with the United States Navy. He just finished a five-year tour in Okinawa, Japan.

Renee (Rheinecker) Hibma, '13, is a veterinarian at Banfield Pet Hospital in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Gabrielle (Markovich) Moore, '13, is a communication specialist for Augusta University Pamplin College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences in Augusta, Ga.

Kerri (Goucher) Fields, '15, was honored by the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce as a Golden Apple Award Winner. Kerri is a second grade teacher at Jefferson Elementary.

Cara Gooch, '15, is the associate marketing manager for Sam's Club Corporate in Bentonville, Ark.

Holly (Ratliff) Miller, '15, is an advanced programmer analyst for Leggett & Platt Inc.

Samuel Miller, '15, received a Master of Science in Biology and is pursuing his Ph.D. in Microbiology at the University of Oklahoma.

Shakira Rhoads, '15, was promoted to assistant director of Career Services at MSSU.

Alexandra Starks, '15, completed her master's degree at the University of Edinburgh in Global Health and Public Policy. She was selected to join the English National Health Service's Graduate Management Training Scheme and is currently based at an acute hospital in London as a data analyst.

Keegan Tinney, '15, joined the Sticklen & Dreyer legal team in Joplin.

Eli Moran, '16, graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a master's degree in Public Administration, with two graduate certificates in Public Budgeting and Financial Management and Public Sector Human Resource Management.

Grace Clouse, '17, is the director of the Joplin branch of NALA, the National Adult Literacy Action group.

Ryan Land, '17, is a technical director for KODE-TV in Joplin.

Ashley Burns, '18, accepted a position with Fort Smith National Historic Site working for the National Park Service in interpretation of the nation's cultural, historical and natural resources.

CJ Carr, '18, signed a professional contract to play basketball for BG Leitershofen based in Augsburg, Germany.

MARRIAGES

JD Hergenrother, '08, and **Erin Rafferty** were married on March 17, 2018.

Greg Renfroe, '16, and **Monica White, '17**, were married on June 2, 2018.

LION CUBS

Jonathan, '02, and **Julie Wengert, '01**, welcomed Jameson Vincent on Dec, 29, 2017

Levi, '10, and **Leslie (Pickel) Jett, '10**, welcomed Lincoln Walker on March 7, 2018.

Brian, '12, and **Stephanie (Sonntag) Borgard, '15**, welcomed Scott Anthony on May 7, 2018.

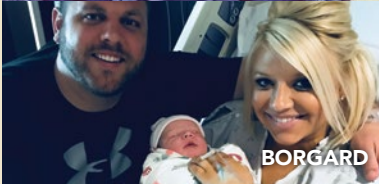
Adan, '11, and **Melissa (Holt) Nance, '11**, welcomed Mateo Isaiah on May 11, 2018.

Brandon and **Abbey (McCoy) Jones, '16**, welcomed Baker Lee on June 13, 2018.

Ryan and **Chelsea (Hardy) Conley, '15**, welcomed Collyn Ann on July 17, 2018.

Da'Rell and Leigh Crittendon welcomed Cruz on Aug. 4, 2018.

Cody, '06, and **Alicia (Elbert) Hilburn, '09**, welcomed Baker Olivia on Aug. 13, 2018.



IN MEMORIAM

ALUMNI

Jeanne Achey, '76
June 3, 2018

Wesley Brewer, '79
Aug. 1, 2018

Alissa Brock, '00
June 5, 2018

George Burgess, '78
April 30, 2018

Dawn Burks, '98, '08
April 28, 2018

Charles Carr, '75
May 11, 2018

James Crocker, '71
Aug. 19, 2018

Thomas J. Danner, '70
June 26, 2018

Lee Dew, '57
May 10, 2018

Charles Duncan, '75
July 17, 2018

Conrad Feather, '97
May 14, 2018

Sue Gardner, '93
July 29, 2018

Mary Alice Hadley, '47
May 21, 2018

Gerald "Jerry" Hamilton, '85
May 18, 2018

Clarence Hendren, '67
Aug. 24, 2018

Michael W. Hill, '01
May 23, 2018

Jerome Jensen, '01
Aug. 2, 2018

Alice Knepper, '91
July 1, 2018

~ Continued next page

IN MEMORIAM

Rebecca Lhamon, '76
May 19, 2018

Marilyn Mailes, '75
June 19, 2018

David Marbough, Sr., '06
Aug. 11, 2018

Michael "Mickey" Mitchell, '80
May 30, 2018

Melvin Monet
May 4, 2018

John Montgomery, '80
June 9, 2018

Gary Neece, '91
May 18, 2018

Roger Neumeyer, '87
July 24, 2018

Marvin R. Page, '94
July 28, 2018

Charles Peck, Jr., '98
April 28, 2018

Cara Renbarger, '88
Aug. 26, 2018

Sandra Shewmake, '78
July 10, 2018

William Solomon, '72
July 22, 2018

Ina Strobel, '73
May 15, 2018

William Snelson, '99
Aug. 14, 2018

Gregg Whitsett, '82, '85
Aug. 25, 2018

Stephen E. Wilson, '82
Aug. 22, 2018

FRIENDS

David Bennett
June 21, 2018

Dr. Ned Chase
May 12, 2018

Dwight Douglas
(Board of Governors)
July 29, 2018

John Furry
June 18, 2018

Ivan Hager
June 11, 2018

Dr. Michael McGonigle
July 9, 2018

Edward Merryman
June 12, 2018

Kenneth Zerkel
July 31, 2018

FACULTY/STAFF

Dr. James Geier
Sociology Professor
May 30, 2018

Donald Lovett
Custodial
May 11, 2018

RETIRED FACULTY/ STAFF

Dr. James Brown
English Professor
July 13, 2018

Bob Kemp
Grounds
July 24, 2018

Dr. Edward Merryman
Dean of Education
June 12, 2018

*As of Sept. 6, 2018

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HOME CONFERENCE GAME SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER '18

11.13	OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE STATE UNIVERSITY	5:30 PM (W)
11.16	HENDERSON STATE UNIVERSITY	12:00 PM (W)
11.29	BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE	7:00 PM (M)

DECEMBER '18

12.01	ROGERS STATE UNIVERSITY	1:30 PM (W)
12.04	TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY	7:00 PM (M)
12.06	UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA	5:30 (W) & 7:00 PM (M)
12.08	NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY	3:30 (W) & 5:30 PM (M)
12.19	UPPER IOWA UNIVERSITY	12:00 PM (M)
12.19	UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SPRINGFIELD	2:00 PM (W)
12.29	TABOR COLLEGE	1:30 PM (W)
12.31	JOHN BROWN UNIVERSITY	5:30 PM (M)

JANUARY '19

01.10	UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL MISSOURI	5:30 (W) & 7:30 PM (M)
01.12	SOUTHWEST BAPTIST UNIVERSITY	1:30 (W) & 3:30 PM (M)
01.23	WASHBURN UNIVERSITY	5:30 (W) & 7:30 PM (M)
01.26	EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY	1:30 (W) & 3:30 PM (M)

(W) - WOMEN'S | (M) - MEN'S

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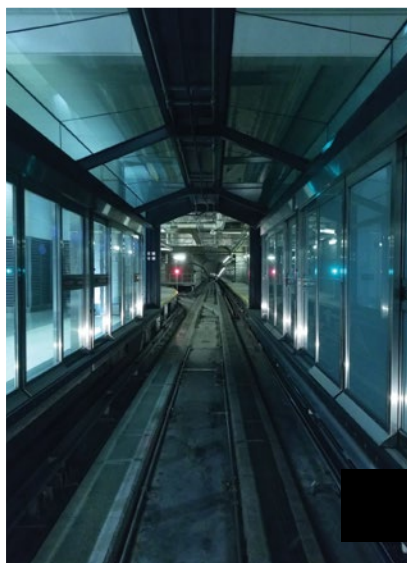
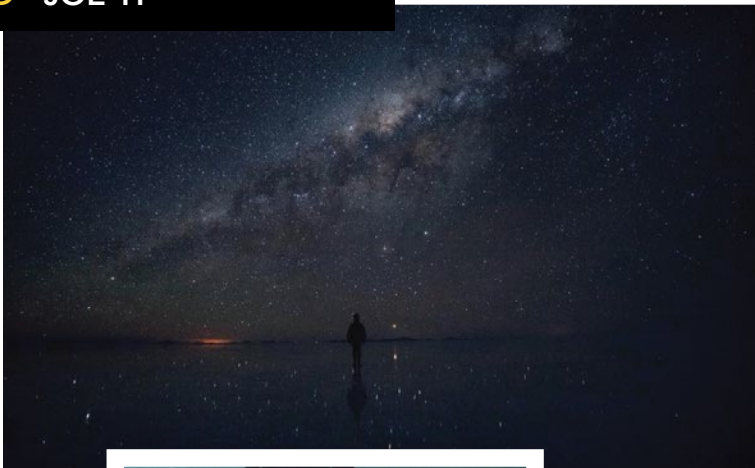
The reason I focus on portrait photography is because of the opportunity I get to connect with both the viewer and subject alike. There's something about capturing the person in their raw state that lets the image speak without any words at all. Direct eye contact is a powerful thing, and is one of the easiest ways to make someone feel validated. I chose to position the main focus on the eyes to keep the viewer engaged as well as uneasy whilst viewing.

Jeren Kent, '17
Photographer

1ST - JEREN KENT, '17



2ND - JOE YI



3RD - PHEOBURKE



Why I Give

Debbie Thompson

"Service above self."

It's a motto Debbie Thompson says she learned through her involvement with Rotary, and it's one that she has adopted into how she approaches life. "I believe giving back means everything," says Thompson. "It makes you feel good and you're making an impact in others' lives."

A former faculty member who worked as a dental hygienist for more than 30 years, Thompson's heart for giving has definitely made an impact on students at Missouri Southern.

Four years ago, she established the Debbie Thompson Spirit of Dental Hygiene Scholarship. Each fall, two dental hygiene students – a first-year and a second-year – receive the \$2,500 scholarship. Over her lifetime, she hopes to help 60 to 70 students in the program.

Thompson is also known for her generosity to students involved in the athletics program. She has supported a variety of initiatives within the Athletics Department and spearheaded fundraising efforts for this past year's SouthernFest. Thompson also serves on the department's

steering committee and is a regular presence at football, basketball and baseball games.

Thompson's philanthropy toward MSSU began with her late husband, Dr. Patrick Thompson's service on the MSSU Alumni Board. He encouraged the purchase of much-needed bats and equipment for Warren Turner's baseball program. The family's generosity continued from there. Patrick Thompson called games for Southern's baseball team, and the press box at the Lions' stadium bears his name. The family also has a suite from which to view the games.

Thompson says she hopes current students are inspired to one day give back. "It's about paying it forward," she says. "I hope these students find their passion in life and support it by volunteering or giving money back. Our time on Earth is short. It's important to leave a legacy behind."

To discuss how you can support MSSU, please call the Office of Development at 417-625-9615.
To give a gift through our secure website, visit www.mssu.edu/giving.



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